


Davy, Sir Humphrey (1778-1829)

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Papers

Another important acquisition is an early autograph letter by Sir Humphry Davy of April 1808, referring to his exciting discovery of the alkali metals only a few months earlier. By passing an electric current from a chemical "pile" (battery) through molten soda or potash, Davy produced shiny globules of metal which burst into flame on exposure to air. This letter predates his published paper on these two new elements, which he here proposes to name potassium and sodium. He also writes that his recent work suggested the existence of similar ~~new~~ new metals in alkaline earths. This work later led to the discovery of four more new metallic elements, barium, strontium, calcium, and magnesium.

DAVY, Humphrey

Sir

Three fragments of
handwriting

DAVY (Sir Humphry, P.R.S., 1778-1829) Doc. signed, From the Appartements of the Royal Society, November 19, 1821, to Dr. Charles Hutton, F.R.S., giving notice of the Elections of Council and offices of the Royal Society, at which his Presence is expected, 1 p. 4to, £3 10s/\$9.80 *ELLIOTT-57*

DAVY, SIR HUMPHREY (1778-1829) Natural Philosopher. Holograph Manuscript Poem entitled:- "Nonsense Verses. The death of the Weazel". 4pp. 4to. The Grange: October 22nd 1825 £10/10/-.
The poem is written in blank verse, consisting of 79 lines, the last 23 of which are written in another hand, and were dictated. The poem begins:- *FLETCHER-57*

It was a lovely morning. Though the year
Was fast departing, yet the hues of heaven
Were bright as in the genial month of June..."

Davy wrote the poem while he was staying with Alexander Baring (later Lord Ashburton) at The Grange, Hampshire, to celebrate the killing of a weazel on the estate.

DAVY TO AMPERE

51. DAVY, Humphry. English chemist. Last page of an Autograph Letter Signed, full page, quarto, undated. Addressed on the verso to M. Ampere, Paris. Seal tear, otherwise fine. *Rendell-71* \$50.00

"the impulse given by the most distinguished scientific members of the Royal Society to the body in favor of distinguished foreigners, than to attempt to create it, in your celebrity is so high that you require no personal favor...from private friendship. Lady Davy who I am sorry to say is carried by bad health to a milder climate will deliver this letter.... I hope she will soon recover and return and save me from a journey to France this season which under any other circumstances except those depending upon the illness of a beloved object would be agreeable to me...."

DAVY, SIR HUMPHRY (1778-1829) Chemist.

A.L.S. to Wm. Phillips (1775-1828) Geologist.

2pp. 8vo. July 1st. 1822. £10/10/-

Writing a second time to thank him for his "very interesting & important Geological work" just published. He had left his first letter at the London Institution and thought Phillips had not received it. He hoped that he would continue his valuable publication "so illustrative of exact geological science". Phillips published Outlines of the Geology of England and Wales in 1822. *FLETCHER-66*

With portrait engraving.



AUTOGRAPHE

de

Davy

Sir Humphrey

OBSERVATIONS

L. a. s. 1 1/2 p. 8°, Waterloo Hotel,
Regent Bridge (1821) von William
Kerr, mit dem er eine Zusammen-
kunft verabredet, um ihn, von
Northampton Kommandeur über Dr.
Kerr Briefkasten zu kommen.
(mit sigelt. Adressen.)

Davy (Sir Humphrey), berühmter
engl. Chemiker, geb. 17. Dec. 1778 zu Penzance in
Cornwall, war seit 1795 Leibarzt bei einem Runds-
arzt, welcher zugleich die Apotheke betrieb, kam
dann als Gehilfe zu Beddoes in Bristol, der ihn
1798 in seiner medicinischen Anstalt (Pneumatic
Institution) beschäftigte. Davy's erste Arbeit betraf
das Stickstoffoxyd, welches Beddoes als Heilmittel
benutzte. Im Jahr 1801 ward er Hilfslehrer und
1802 Professor der Chemie an der Royal Institution
in London, auch hielt er Vorlesungen am Board
of Agriculture. Seit 1801 Mitglied der Royal
Society, fungirte er 1820—27 als Präsident ders.

selben, bis ihn zuletzt ein Schlaganfall nöthigte,
seine Stelle niederzulegen. Im Jahr 1812 erhielt
er die Ritterwürde, verheirathete sich mit einer rei-
chen Dame und machte nun häufige Reisen auf dem
Continent. Er starb 29. Mai 1829 in Genf. D.
galt am Ende des ersten Decenniums unsers Jahr-
hunderts als der bedeutendste Chemiker, mit vor-
züglicher Begabung, neue Hilfsmittel für die experi-
mentale Ermittlung der Zusammenfassung der Kör-
per in Anwendung zu bringen, vereinte er eine
damals seltene Unabhängigkeit von den bisher an-
erkannten theoretischen Lehren. Er hat zuerst in dem
von Lavoisier aufgestellten System der Chemie eine
wesentliche Veränderung zur Geltung gebracht. Im
Jahr 1806 begannen seine eminenten Arbeiten über
die Einwirkung des elektrischen Stroms auf chemi-
sche Verbindungen, welche ihn zur Entdeckung des
Kaliums und Natriums, der Erdsalzmethalle und
des Bors führten. Andererseits lehrte er seit 1810 das
Gas als einfachen Körper betrachten und gab da-
mit den Anstoß zu den wichtigsten Reformen in der
Theorie der Gase. Seine Arbeiten liegen die Be-
ziehungen zwischen den chemischen und elektrischen
Kräften klarer und bestimmter hervortreten, als dies
bis dahin der Fall gewesen war; er verwarf die An-
nahme eines besondern Wärmelebens und suchte die
Wärmeercheinungen auf Bewegungen der feinsten
Theilchen der Körper zurückzuführen. Im Jahr
1815 entdeckte er die Eigenschaft der Metallbrat-
gewebe, dem Luftstrom der Flamme zu weichen,
und konstruirte die nach ihm benannte Sicherheits-
lampe. Von seinen Schriften nennen wir: »Chem-
ical and philosophical researches, chiefly concern-
ing nitrous oxid and its respirations« (Lond. 1800;
deutsch von Wasse, Leipz. 1812—14, 2 Bde.); »Ele-
ments of chemical philosophy« (Lond. 1812; deutsch
von Woff, Berl. 1814); »Elements of agricultural
chemistry« (Lond. 1813, zuletzt 1856; deutsch von
Woff, Berl. 1814, von Germstädt, das. 1817);
»On the safety-lamp and on flames« (Lond. 1828);
»Salmonia, or the Days of fly-fishing« (das. 1828,
5. Aufl. 1870; deutsch von Reubert, Leipz. 1840);
»Consolations in travel, or the last days of a philo-
sopher« (3. Aufl. Lond. 1831, 7. Aufl. 1869; deutsch
von Martins, Hamb. 1833). Die gesammelten
Werke, herausgeg. v. John D., erschienen in 9 Bdn.,
Lond. 1839. Vgl. Paris, The life of Sir Humphrey
D. (Lond. 1831, 2 Bde.), und die von seinem Bruder
John D. herausgegebenen Memoirs of the life of
Sir H. D. (das. 1836, 2 Bde.; deutsch von Reubert,
Leipz. 1840, 4 Bde.); »Fragmentary Remains,
literary and scientific of Sir H. D.« (Lond. 1838).



110 DAVY (Sir Humphrey, Bart., Natural Philosopher, invented
safety lamp, 1778-1829) A.L.s., 2 pp., 8vo. To William Kerr, with
whom he is arranging an appointment to give him particulars concern-
ing Dr. Kerr. Waterloo Hotel, Regent Bridge [1821]



My dear Sir

I am indebted to you for
two or three very kind letters, which
arrived at a time when I was
unable to answer them being confined
to my bed by a dangerous fever. -
Be pleased to receive my thanks. -

I have called the basis of
Potash, Potassium that of
Soda, Sodium. -

- As soon as my paper is
printed I shall have the
pleasure of sending you a
copy. -

I am working upon the Earths

I think I have gone far
enough to say that they
are certain inflammable
matter, probably metallic hence all
stones are probably compound oxides.

I have had great pleasure
in perusing the excellent
syllabus you were so good
as to send me. —

I am my dear Sir
Very sincerely yours
H. Davy —

April 9 1808.



Painted by Lonsdale.

Engraved by Thomson

By permission from the large Port published by Messrs. Agnew & Sons

SIR HUMPHREY DAVY, BART. P.R.S.

Humphrey Davy

FISHER, SON & CO LONDON, 1837

Sir H. Darg presents
his compliments to Mr

Parker. Dr Darg

has been for some months

at Edinburgh & it would

be of no use to send

him there immediately

as he is paid there for

one year in the district

of the medical division

of the Army in Scotland

Sir H. Darg presents
his compliments to Mr
Parker.

✓ - The Nation found upon the
Soil of Egypt in different places
& in the "banks" of the Nile
probably owes its origin to
a similar cause -

have been proposed with regard

to affinity; but they are

involved for the most

part in the land that

have been stated &

located expressions

Dr. H. Davy

DSI

3

Dear Sir

Dear Sir

From your last letter
as well as from the former one
I fear the usages of the Royal
Society have been misrepresented
to you.

Perhaps the whole of your paper
cannot be read, yet a
sufficient part of it may
be read to give an idea
of its contents to the Society
in this respect & it may
be submitted to the
Committee of papers in readiness
& published in the Transactions
in the V^o now printing.
- All the papers was before the Society

amongst them one of my own
can only be partially read
for want of time. —

— I called at your House to
explain these circumstances to
you as I should be sorry
that any misunderstanding
should deprive the Royal
Society of the pleasure of
receiving your communication
or should retard the publication
of such important physiological
results.

I am Dear Sir
Yours Most humble Servant
J. H. Dancy

Wm. B. B. B.

Wm. B. B. B.

10 DAVY

Bridge St. Blackfriars

5 o'clock Sat^y afternoon

Dear Doctor

Having just got home, & not
feeling myself quite equal to the en-
joyment of company, I have thought
it best to dine at home, & thereby have
a little leisure to consider what I
am to say upon the occasion. As
the Diploma is to be presented at 8
o'clock, it will be proper for W. Davy
to be in the Theatre about 10 minutes
before 8; and to take his seat on the
lowest bench, on the right of the little
hatch door-way leading to the table, &
close to it, so as to let him ^{readily} approach
the President when required to have
the

diploma put into his hands. Previous
to that moment, & during the short ad-
-dress made upon the occasion, he will
merely have to stand up in his place;
if he chuse to reply, he may either do
it before returning to his seat, or im-
-mediately afterwards. - You will find me
in the Theatre when you arrive there. -

With best wishes I subscribe to
W. Davy, believe me

Very truly Yours -

J. Barry

May 1800
Dr Curry

D^r Marcet.

St. Mary Axe

57

Monroe comes. the death of the loosed.

The Surge.

Oct 22 25

It was a lovely morning. Though the year
was fast departing, yet the hues of heaven
were bright as in the prime of June.
And but few leaves had fallen though their tints
in hectic beauty marked their sun decay.

Kipped in the day & lovely moonlight night.
The fishes sported in the clear calm lake
And when the waters gushed & fell in foam
Over the soft green rocks the trout was seen
Rising in sportive leaps, seeking the source
Of cool pure & cool of these fair mountain streams
Nature was so tranquil that she seemed
At peace with Man; & as in paradise
Birds with each other in sweet union dwell
Covering the water. On its verdant banks
A Temple rose above, whose darkened roof
Had paid the dense column & adorned
A wilderness of meads & cultured plants
From character of the sun with stately forms.

From pure Roman models. Senators
Before the temple stood a lovely dame
In lofty social converse. Senators
Who from their grateful country oft had gained
The highest need of praise, then she deserved

All love & popular applause & sought
By high enduring & ennobled worth
To gain that steady joy which awaits
^{Partially} Utility - a work of time & nature.

Dances where minds might claim the Roman virtue
Whilst their forms were worthy of their temples
~~Embedded in their forms & virtues~~

When the Greeks embodied in their deities

Abstracted grace & beauty: whether the ~~same~~ power
had ^{perfect} of form & health immortal

Or the pure ~~and~~ expression of intelligence

Or the natural dignity whose claims

Kept in their corner a natural bloom

Still bore the aspect of the early spring. -

All were rejoicing in the ^{lovely} season.

When suddenly a cry of war arose.

A warrior from the neighbouring thicket sprung

And darted o'er the plain. Dark was his hue
Incognate marking with his front of blood
marked. Like the warrior wood his teeth
armed with a piercing point & cutting edge
His brow sharp. His aspect terrible.
Strutting. Undaunted yielding to the force
Of high impetuous courage onward lurked
There. Little youths with powerful weapons armed
One in reserve directly with master eye the wide
Charge was made, ^{force} and ^{attack} repulse
Of all quailing from the attack the hero fled
And reappearing in the dark hiding place
He checked them, but soon drawn at
He was compelled again in rapid flight
To seek the open space. And here attacked
On various sides, at length he dying fell
Beneath the warrior's hand. Who thence obtained
Immortal honour, & his brows were crowned
By lovely hands with Laurels. The monster's skin
Was made his trophy. And a hundred songs

Of triumph hailed him, as in victor's garb
He claimed his high & honored meed. In the
So in the capitol's chamber sat,
In more than regal state. The purple robe
Flowing around him. And the ruddy hue
The blood shot glowing in his cheeks;
Enlarging his mighty breast & narrower throat
And powerful frame. Whilst joyful shouts
Of wondering multitudes, freed from the goal
Proclaim him conqueror. So Pompey stood
In all the gorgeous state & splendid spoils
Asia could give. The robes which the East
Had hoarded in her thousand happy years
Of conquest, & of glory. Whilst the chiefs
Of orient lands in golden chains bowed down
To grace the offerings, which their counsel made
To the emperor, & refer these to the
People of Rome but Princes of all the Earth

Sir,

These are to give Notice, that on the
Thirtieth Day of November 1821, being S.^T ANDREW'S day,
the Council and Officers of the Royal Society are to be
Elected for the Year ensuing; at which Election, Your Presence
is expected, at Eleven of the Clock in the Forenoon, at the Apart-
ments of the Royal Society, in Somerset Place, Strand.

From the Apartments
of the Royal Society.
November 19: 1821.

H. Davy. P.R.S.

Dr Charles Hutton -

155
July.

DSI

Watloo Hotel
Regent Bridge

Dear Sir

If you happen to be
disengaged any time tomorrow
morning (Thursday) between ten
o'clock, I shall be glad to
see you. - I am just
come from Northampton
& can give you tolerable
accounts of Dr Kerr. -

- My breakfast will be
on the table at 12 half-
nine. & if you are
disengaged I shall be glad

Wm Kerr Esq.

7. Union Street

Ed. of the House.

1821. With Love

If you will please like

I am Dear Sir

Very truly yours

H. Davy

Received of
H. Davy
the sum of
£100
on the 1st day of
January 1800



50-99 The impulse given by the most distinguished
 distinguished scientific members of
 the Royal Society to the body in
 favour of distinguished foreigners, then
 to attempt to create it; — &
 your celebrity is so high that
 you again are personal favour or
 interference from private friendship. —

55-100 Davy who I am sorry to
 say is crippled by bad health to your
 kinder share with deliver his letter
 to you, or send it. — I hope he
 will soon recover, & return, & save us
 from a journey to France this winter
 when under any other circumstances
 except those depending upon the illness
 of a beloved guest would be agreeable
 to me. — My remembrance is kindly to
 Mr Underwood. I am Dear Sir
 very sincerely yours H. Davy.

N. du Palais St Victor
n 19

A Monsieur

M. Ampère, Membre
de l'Académie Royal des Sciences
&c &c &c.

H. Davy. FRS à Paris.

Copy of a letter to
Dr. Leary - 1 April 1899

Dear Doctor

Mr. Cooper told me yesterday that he was much amused on being told that I had found fault with him for the offence which he had given you the other day. The circumstance which afforded him this pretended amusement, was that I had myself appeared anxious that he should proceed to the examination in question one morning when you were not present. I believe that I have already related the circumstance to you myself. But as I should be sorry if, thro' any misapprehension, you were made to partake of Mr. C's merriment upon the occasion, I wish merely to repeat to you that I had indeed thought that this examination could without impropriety have been made in the presence of your two colleagues, (one of whom was principally concerned in the case), ^{particularly as} ~~in fact~~ I was not in the least aware of your having ~~any wish~~ ^{any wish} about the matter,

~~I really~~ ^{not} know ^{at} that time ~~was concerned~~ which was the most concerned
Dr Babington or ^{you} ~~yourself~~ ^{in the office} ~~But after Mr. [unclear] having~~
declined to do it then, ^{at that time} ~~concerned~~ there was a glaring
impropriety in ^{his} doing it two days afterwards, before
a total stranger ^{without giving you any notice,} at home of us being present. This
however, as I told Mr Cooper yesterday, was a mere
matter of opinion, or fellow-feeling & on my side, without
the least grounds to personal ~~offense~~ resentment.
My only ~~offer~~ ^{objection} now is to ~~refute~~ ^{repel} the charge of misrepresentation
which Mr Cooper ~~has~~ ^{partly seriously partly in} ~~is~~ ^{a peculiar way} ~~for thought~~
to throw upon me —

These lines were written
in haste with a pencil
on Countess Purgstall's
letter to Lord Stair. with
whom she had always
kept up habits of
friendship & a constant
correspondence during
her seclusion & long
residence at Schloss.

Hainfeld.

One morning at Oxen-
ford Castle Lord Hailes
showed us what
an enormous quantity
of his letters he
possessed. & readily
showed present some
pages from them,
& he allowed Miss
Ferguson to copy
out the adjoining
very pleasing
verses for me.

WJ

The following lines were written by Sir H. Davy with
- Pencil - He entitled them - An attempt to express
a thought of consolation hasty and poor, but awakened
by a very strong feeling. - (To the Countess de Purgstall.)

The mighty pillars of the Earth
The sunk rocks, the solid stones
Which give no thought, no motion birth
Which are to Nature lifeless bones.

Change slowly, but their dust remains
And every atom measured, weighed
& whirled by blasts along the plains
Or in the fertile furrow laid.

The drops which from the passing shower
Fade in the noon day bright & clear
Or kindle beauty in the flower
Or wake freshness in the air.

Nothing is lost - The ethereal fire
Which from the farthest star descends
Through the immensity of space
Its course by worlds attractive bends.

To reach the Earth - The eternal Laws
Preserve one glorious wise Design
Order amidst confusion flows
And all the system is Divine.

If Matter cannot be destroy'd
The living Mind can never die
If e'en Creative when alloy'd
How sure is Immortality!

Then think, that Intellectual Light
Thou lookest on Earth is beaming
Its lustre purer & more bright
Obscured no more by mortal will.

The things most perfect on the earth
Though transient, and short-lived they
Have yet a source of heavenly birth
— Not the fabric of a dream.

The lovely changeful light of even
The fading gleams of morning skies
The transient various tints of Heaven
From the Eternal Sun arise. —

To James Losh Esq^r

near Newcastle

by General Bentham

My dear Sir

Permit me
to introduce to you
General Bentham who
wishes for the pleasure
of your acquaintance.

I rejoice that
your Philopical Institution
is making so rapid a
progress. I thank you very
much for making me
acquainted with Mr Bigge

I am my dear Sir
with the greatest esteem
yours H. Davy
Royal M^{ty}.

Given to me by Mr. Loh 20th Decr 1803.

^{J.D.}
Mr. Edward In Humphrey Davy. Knt. & some credit e Beront.

My dear Madam-

Earl Gower, Hamilton
Place is the name
of the house for the copy
of the work. Sir Har-
vey is I think better
of his continental scheme
approaching. I shall
give him your note,
which must be flatter

Dear Madam

ing to his piscatorial
Service. I am my dear
Madam
Yours sincerely - Geo. D. H.
Thos. D. H. Jones - V. M.

July 1st. 1822.

Dear Sir

I wrote to you a
letter of thanks about a
 fortnight ago for the very
interesting & important
geological work you have
just published; but as
I left it at the London
Postoffice to be put into
the post I am not sure
you received it.

- I again repeat how

thanks & venture to hope
that you & your able
coadjutors will continue
a publication so valuable
to your countrymen &
to illustration of exact
zoological science. —

I am Dear Sir
Very sincerely yours
H. Davy.

W^m Phillips Esq.

My dear Sir

I am indebted to You for
two or three very kind letters, which
arrived at a time when I was
unable to answer them being confined
to my bed by a dangerous fever. —
Be pleased to receive my thanks. —

I have called the basis of
Potash, Potassium that of
Soda, Sodium. —

— As soon as my paper is
printed I shall have the
pleasure of sending You a
copy. —

I am working upon the Earths

I think I have gone far
enough to say that they
are certain inflammable
matter, probably metallic hence all
stones are probably compound oxides.

I have had great pleasure
in perusing the excellent
efforts you were so good
as to send me. —

I am My dear Sir
very sincerely yours
H. Davy —

April 9 1808.

Miss Abbott

